

# A Letter to Parents on the House Corner



## What We Do and Why

The house corner is a very important part of our classroom. The work children do in the house corner is called dramatic play or pretend play. In the house corner children take on a role and recreate real-life experiences. They use props and make-believe about a wide variety of topics.

The ability to pretend is very important to children's later academic success in school. When children pretend, they have to recall experiences they've had and re-create them. To do this, they have to be able to picture their experiences in their minds. For example, to play the role of a doctor, children have to remember what tools a doctor uses, how a doctor examines a patient, and what a doctor says. In playing the role of a doctor, children have to be able to cooperate with other children and defend their own ideas.

When children are engaged in dramatic play in the classroom, we encourage them to talk about what they are doing. For example, we might say:

- "What do mothers do when children are sick?"
- "What kind of cake are you going to make: Chocolate or vanilla?"
- "Why does your baby cry so much?"

We ask questions that help children extend their thinking and their play.

## What You Can Do At Home

You can encourage the same kind of pretend play at home by having a box of dress-up clothes available or by putting a sheet over a card table and making a hideout for your child. Such activities are particularly good for a rainy day.

One way to extend your child's dramatic play is to collect different kinds of dress-up clothes and put them in boxes with picture labels showing the contents. For instance, one box might contain an apron, bibs, cups, plates, spoons, small cooking utensils, a whisk broom, and other objects for use in the kitchen. Another box might include hats with visors or recognizable insignia denoting an occupation, shoes, neckties, shirts, vests, coats, or trousers. A hospital prop box could hold nurses' hats, white coats, toy thermometers, stethoscopes, empty pill bottles, a small pillow, an eye patch, and a watch.

When the time is appropriate, you can give your child one of the boxes and encourage play by asking questions such as these: "What can we do about this sick baby?" or "Will you make grandmother a birthday cake?"

When you play pretend with your child, you are teaching important learning skills and spending valuable time together.